



State of California  
 The Natural Resources Agency  
 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

# NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>	Green Ridge/Mescal Ridge Fuel Break		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	Palo Colorado, CA (north Big Sur)	<b>COUNTY</b>	Monterey
<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
<b>CONTACT</b>	CAL FIRE San Benito-Monterey Unit Headquarters		
<b>ADDRESS</b>	2221 Garden Road Monterey, CA 93940	<b>PHONE</b>	(831) 333-2600

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

This project will reduce fuel loading along roads in Palo Colorado, Monterey County; the northernmost community in the greater Big Sur area. In addition, portions of the project area are used as access for fire suppression and emergency egress for the residents of South Coast. The project includes fuel modification along paved and native surface roads in the community and on the ridgelines. The project will reduce woody vegetation less than 12" DBH within 10 feet of a road. Vegetation will be reduced by approximately 60% within up to 100 feet of a road. Dead, diseased, and dying trees that may impact a road or structure will be removed. All remaining trees near a road will be pruned up to 16 feet or 50% of the live crown (whichever is less) within 100 feet of a road. This will open emergency ingress/egress in the event of an emergency as well as create defensible space for potential fires. The vegetation will be reduced by a combination of hand crews and mechanical means. The hand crews will use chainsaws; the resulting material shall be chipped and used as mulch on the property. The mechanical treatment area will be masticated, with the mulch left on site for soil protection and to control weed invasion.

**EXEMPTION STATUS**

- Categorical Exemption Type/Section: Class 1, 4 §15301 Existing Facilities, §15304 Minor Alterations to Land
- Statutory Exemption (state code section):
- Ministerial (§21080(b)(1); 15268)
- Declared Emergency (§21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
- Emergency Project (§21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))

**REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT**

This project fits under portions of Class 1 and Class 4 Categorical Exemptions described in the CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR Section 15301, 15304) pertaining to existing structures and minor alterations to land, will not have a significant effect on the environment, and is exempt from the provisions of CEQA.

Field review by CAL FIRE staff confirmed that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. The Department has concluded that no significant environmental impact would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland/timberland, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, or to utilities and service systems. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at CAL FIRE's San Benito-Monterey Unit Headquarters.

**DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING**

*Duane Shintaku* 12/18/14  
 Duane Shintaku, Deputy Director Date  
 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

